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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

November 14, 2009

LEASE OF FARM LAND TO FOREIGN COMPANIES
HURTS ETHIOPIAN FARMERS

As if the ceding of Ethiopia's fertile land to the Sudan was not disastrous enough, the Meles Zenawi regime has now leased more than 3 million hectares of land (7.4 million acres) to foreign companies that are to farm this land and carry off the produce back to their countries. It is a 15 Birr (US\$1.19) cheap sale per hectare and Arab, Chinese, South Korean and Indian companies have rushed in to take advantage and the so called investors are being given grace periods on payment.

The Meles regime claims that it thus attracting foreign investment and that Ethiopia has a lot of uncultivated land anyways but the ongoing lease of arable land to foreign investors has been roundly criticized as detrimental to the interest of Ethiopian farmers. The Indian food processor Karuturi Global Ltd, Midroc company of the Saudi sheikh Alamoudi, the Saudi company of the Ben Laden family, Chinese and South Korean firms are all aiming to produce food for export and the first rice harvest has been already presented to the Saudi king according to reports. The regime claims that this measure will also help bring employment to Ethiopians but this a flimsy justification as in most cases the foreign firms like that of the Chinese depend on their own labour force (mostly prisoners). Furthermore, Ethiopia has some 14 million people in need of food aid and the whole notion of farming and exporting food becomes bizarre to say the least, In addition, most of the fertile land is confiscated from Ethiopian farmers and the extensive farming by foreigners is ecologically questionable such as the felling of trees in Gambella and the disruption of the life of pastoralists in Southern Omo. The regime claims such land as has been given to foreigners in areas like Southern Omo is "empty" but this (which echoes the regime's attempt to justify the ceding of land to the Sudan by alleging the land is not inhabited!) has been proven wrong.

The ongoing massive lease of land in Ethiopia and other African countries is being labelled a new scramble for Africa and a "neo-colonial" action. The Chinese investment in Ethiopia has already been singled out as being exploitative and the harsh treatment of Ethiopian workers by the Chinese (the government has given them the right to physically beat the workers) has been condemned. Ethiopia gains little or nothing from this plunder-encouraging measure. The new and destructive scramble should be stopped. Ethiopians like their kin in Madagascar should rise up and say Ethiopia is not for sale.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

November 26/2009

THE US AGOA PROGRAM IS HELPING THE RULING PARTY

On Nov. 19, the US Agency for International Development- funded AGOA Plus said it brokered a contract worth as much as \$30 million annually between Jackson, Mississippi-based Atlas Manufacturing Group and the Adwa (Tigray) based Almeda Textile. Almeda is part of a group of companies that was founded and is controlled by members of the ruling TPLF party under the EFFORT umbrella. EFFORT controls most of the sectors of the Ethiopian economy and is chaired by TPLF Central Committee member Abadi Zemo and its deputy is none other than Azeb Mesfin, the queen of corruption and the wife of tyrant Meles Zenawi. Almeda, that is to say the dictatorial regime of Meles Zenawi is getting a US\$ 30 million contract through a shady deal that enjoyed the manoeuvre and backing of the ruling party and State.

EFFORT is controlled and owned by the ruling party and its notorious quasi monopolist control over the economy has been denounced many times. The profit gained by the EFFORT companies goes direct into the coffers of the ruling party and allegations that the companies are not owned by the TPLF or that the profit goes to development projects in Tigray are baseless. So, why is AGOA funding the dictatorial ruling party to the detriment of the interest and welfare of the Ethiopian people?

The EPRP once again expresses its objection to such types of ill disguised business deals that actually fund the dictatorial regime and its ruthless party. Such actions go against the interest of the Ethiopian people, do not benefit the Ethiopian economy and only serve to strengthen the machinery of repression put in place by the Meles Zenawi regime. The EPRP calls on Ethiopians all over the world to express their protest to AGOA, to the Atlas Manufacturing Group and to the US government.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

December 1, 2009

STATEMENT ON WORLD AIDS DAY

More than 3 million Ethiopians are afflicted by the AIDS and virus and hundreds of thousands have died from the malady over the years. As the world observes AIDS Day, it behoves on the EPRP to clearly point out that the responsibility of the group in power in Addis Ababa is big and undeniable.

The EPRDF regime practically dismantled the anti Aids institution set up prior to 1991 and its bankrupt policies led to the overall deterioration of the health services all over the country. The social climate favoured by the regime and the poverty that has ruined the country have led to the spread of prostitution with underage girls involved in the trade and the special bars frequented by the members of the ruling elite. The regime has also benefited from the sex tourism that remains unmentioned officially but is flourishing. International assistance to victims of AIDS and prevention projects has been embezzled by none other than Azeb Mesfin, the wife of Meles Zenawi himself. She heads the anti AIDS body and as corrupt as she is she has focused on diverting the money given by international donors to help combat AIDS in Ethiopia. The regime pays lip service to the campaign to fight AIDS by making people aware and taking health and other preventive measures without actually taking any effective measure.

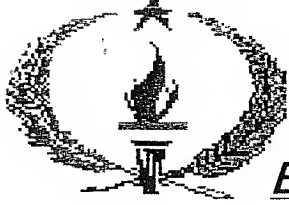
The AIDS virus affects mostly women and mainly young adults and combined with the malaria epidemic it has a devastating effect on the labor force and the future of the country. Rampant poverty and the resulting desperation, the regime controlled sell of drugs have also aggravated the problem with rape and sexual abuse on the rise. This being the sad state of affairs, the EPRP not only condemns the irresponsible regime but has also continued to call on the Ethiopian people to take measures to protect themselves from the deadly virus.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

December 30/2009

**STATEMENT ON THE MAKALLE MEETING OF SUDANESE AND
MELES REGIME OFFICIALS**

The 12th so called Ethio-Sudanese Development and Boundary Commission meeting has started in Makalle town, Tigrai, and is expected to last for four days. The 135 members Sudanese delegation is led by General Salah Abdella while the Meles Zenawi side is represented by security chief Getachew Assefa and top officials of the regions (kilil) of Tigrai, Amhara, Beni Shangul-Gumuz and Gambella. Tigrai is bordering the Sudan because the ruling TPLF forcefully annexed the Gondar territories (of Humera, etc) into Tigrai region.

The meeting has little to discuss regarding development given the real and grim economic situation especially in Ethiopia while the four day meeting is to focus on security matters (border control, coordinating against insurgencies, deportation of refugees, etc...) and the ceding of land by Ethiopia. It is to be recalled that the traitorous Meles regime has already ceded to the Sudan Ethiopian land in Quara (Sudanese troops are stationed inside Ethiopian territory in the Nefso Gebeya region of Quara) and is planning to cede more land from Gambella. The Meles Beshir alliance has proved to be detrimental to the interest of the Ethiopian people and to the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and the EPRP strongly denounces this unholy alliance that would be of little benefit to the security in the Horn of Africa. The claim that the hundreds of delegates will be discussing tourism, health, sport and people to people relations is only a cover for the real and main discussion to be held on the question of security and land claims. The Meles regime is also being visited by Egyptian prime minister to assure the traitor's compliance with the wishes of Egypt vis a vis the sage of the Nile, wishes objected to by most Nile Basin countries. The EPRP states that there should be no doubt whatsoever that the Ethiopian people will use all available means to protect the territorial integrity of their country.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

January 1/2010

EPRP DENOUNCES THE JAMMING OF FINOTE RADIO
BY THE MEELS REGIME

The repressive regime of Meles Zenawi has continued to jam the Finote Democracy radio broadcast to Ethiopia. The jamming is centered in and around Addis Ababa while the radio continues to be heard, sometimes with difficulty, in other parts. Finote Democracy had broadcast to Ethiopia for more than a decade now.

The anti democratic regime of Meles Zenawi continues to violate with impunity the right of the people to get information. It controls the media (TV and radio) and jams independent radios like Finote. It has blocked access to many web sites. It continues to insidiously practice censorship and has harassed and closed independent newspapers. As its charade of a general election approaches (May 2010), the regime has further stepped up its repressive campaign against the media. The jamming of Finote, with the help of China, is one such example.

The EPRP strongly condemns the jamming action undertaken by the Meles regime against the Finote Democracy radio. The condemnation includes China which has aided and abetted the regime in its jamming and web sites blocking. The EPRP calls on international forces to raise their voices in condemnation of jamming action taken against Finote Democracy radio.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

January 3/2010

CONDEMN THE BETRAYAL OF THE MELES REGIME
ON THE QUESTION OF THE NILE RIVER

The tyrannical regime of Meles Zenawi has struck a secret deal with Egypt on the question of the Nile and the said deal reportedly betrays the national interest of Ethiopia and that of the Nile Basin countries.

Officially the Meles regime signed with Egypt a Memorandum of Understanding to establish an Ethiopian-Egyptian Council of Commerce but sources close to the regime in Addis Ababa reveal that Egypt's interest not to sign an agreement demanded by the Nile Basin Initiative has obtained the support of Meles Zenawi. Ethiopia's Blue Nile supplied 85 % of the Nile's water. Egypt and the Sudan are the two countries still opposing the equal sharing of the Nile water resource and are proposing the maintenance of an old colonial agreement that gave Egypt the lion's share of the use of the Nile water. An agreement signed in 1959 between Egypt and Sudan allowed Egypt alone to use 55.5 billion cubic meters (87% of the Nile's flow) and Sudan 18.5 cubic metres of water each year. Ethiopia, which contributes more than 80 percent of the water to the Nile basin, and the rest of the riparian countries were left out.

The present deal followed a meeting between Meles and the Egyptian prime minister and which was chaired by Meles Zenawi in Addis Abeba. Most observers have affirmed that the Meles regime would shift position and back Egypt thereby betraying Ethiopia and the Nile riparian countries. Egypt has been dragging its feet on the issue of signing a Nile Basin Cooperative Framework for the establishment of a permanent river basin commission. The Meles regime has already handed over thousands of hectares of fertile land to Egyptian agriculture firms. Back in October an Egyptian delegation comprising of 90 owners, leaders and representatives of nine giant Egyptian companies inspected land in Ethiopia and the latest delegation led by Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif included 26 agricultural companies. The sale of Ethiopian land to foreign companies constitutes a serious danger to the sovereignty

and economic interests of Ethiopia and the deal that Meles Zenawi has struck with Egypt over the Nile is a serious betrayal that calls for strong condemnation. The EPRP calls on the people of Ethiopia to fight with all appropriate means against the traitorous regime and its anti Ethiopia deals.



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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

January 20, 2010

MELES REGIME'S USE OF FOOD AID FOR POLITICS DENOUNCED

Further evidence has emerged that the cruel regime of Meles Zenawi is using food aid sent to famine victims for political purposes. Previously, credible accusations had been made exposing the fact that the Meles regime diverts food aid from the famine victims to its army, to the market (for sale that benefits it), and for the granary in its Tigray homeland.

The Meles Zenawi regime practices an ethnic discriminatory politics that has severely affected the members of ethnic groups other than its own. This policy of discrimination and hatred has particularly targeted the Amhara people. Thus, it has come as no surprise that the regime has ignored the famine victims in Amhara areas up to now. However, this has changed recently as the regime approaches its so called May 2010 general election. The people of Northern Shoa, who have been forced to boil plants and leaves to survive the famine, have now been told that they will be given food aid if they become members of the EPRDF and vote for the ruling front. However, the starving people of Northern Shoa (districts of Rassa, Kure Beret, Abaya Attir, Senbete and Farsi) have boldly rejected this late and politically tied aid.

It must be noted that the donor countries have made little or no pressure on the Meles regime to stop using food aid for political gains and for its own financial benefits. In the absence of an outcry, the regime has been emboldened to use food aid to get political support and to pursue its ethnic discriminatory politics of hate.

The EPRP condemns the callous and brutal actions of the Meles regime and calls on the donor countries to make sure that the food aid gets to the victims and does not become one more instrument of subjugation and oppression.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

January 29/2010

STATEMENT ON THE CRASH OF EAL FLIGHT ET 409

The EPRP extends its heartfelt condolences to the 90 victims of the Ethiopian Airlines crash.

The tragic accident has highlighted the plight of Ethiopian young women employees as domestic workers in Lebanon and the racism and brutal treatment they receive there in what is actually a modern slave existence. The Lebanese officials have exhibited the usual racism even around the handling of the accident and their treatment of the relatives and friends of the 23 young Ethiopians who perished in the crash. Ethiopian mourners at the Beirut airport were segregated and separated from the Lebanese mourners and the officials did all in their capacity to show their contempt for Ethiopians, dead or alive. Reprehensible as this is, it is only the tip of the iceberg. Young Ethiopian women sent off to Lebanon (and they are more than 30,000), in a operation that financially benefits the cronies of the ruling group led by Meles Zenawi, have been subjected to modern slavery conditions: subjected to crude racism, beaten up, burnt by boiling water, mutilated, murdered, raped by their employers or gang raped, deported without any wages, jailed when they demand their rights, etc... Many of the girls are underage (less than 18 years) and without any protection. Many who have tried to flee via Syria to Cyprus and eventually to Turkey and Greece have died, suffered imprisonment and rape and/or now suffering in Turkey and Greece.

While Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has paid due respect to the Ethiopian dead other officials including the Lebanese Minister of Transportation have shown callousness and the unsubstantiated accusations against the experienced Ethiopian pilot (before even the Black Box got checked) is very inappropriate. The racist bias shown to the mourners is condemnable to say the least. The EPRP has time and again called for an end the human trafficking and the cruel mistreatment of Ethiopian domestic "workers" in Lebanon.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

February 10/2010

"REGISTER AND VOTE FOR US OR ELSE"

REGIME INTENSIFIES HARASSMENT OF PEOPLE

There is actually no doubt that the May 2010 general election will be won hands down by the ruling EPRDF of Meles Zenawi. The electoral commission and the electoral laws are made to serve the interests of the ruling front and if there is any chance of things turning against it the EPRDF would repeat the 2005 action: rig itself back to power after killing close to 200 protesters and jailing more than 50,000 people including more than a 100 opposition leaders. The ruling front controls the media, the army, the police, the security police, most of the local so called electoral observers are its own loyal recruits or members, millions have been forcefully made members of the ruling front, food aid for famine victims is being used for political ends by the regime in the absence of any meaningful donors' protest, etc...

The police and cadres of the regime are presently going from house to house in Addis Abeba and other towns forcing people to register as the number of people registered has been minimal. People are being asked to show the election registration card and the EPRDF membership card "or else" face reprimands. At the same time, officials of the Amhara Development Association (controlled by the ANDM, a satellite of the power holding Tigrean front TPLF) have been going door to door in Addis Abeba and demanding Amhara households to be member of and contribute to the ADA. All this constitutes political action against the people, a sure and clear violation of their rights. It can be said with certainty that the regime would report in May that the election had a "massive turnout" and the "majority" voted for the ruling front. The boxes are ready, they will be filled with prepared cards and the front will be declared the winner with much empty fanfare. Election in Ethiopia has always been a farce and no more is expected in May 2010.

The EPRP condemns the violations of the rights of the people by the repressive Meles Zenawi regime.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

March 8/ 2010

MARCH 8 : STRUGGLE OF ETHIOPIAN WOMEN CONTINUES

Every New Year has brought more disaster to the people of Ethiopia and it is none other than women who have been forced to bear the brunt of the dictatorship. 2010 has not brought any improvement in the sad plight of Ethiopian women whose rights continue to be trampled upon by a chauvinist regime that pays lip service to rights and equality while pursuing an all round repressive politics.

Employment, education, equal pay: name it and women have few rights still. Of thousands of street children in the capital itself, the majority are girls and they continue to be victims of rape and AIDS. Domestic violence is on the rise and women receive little or no protection. Under age girls prowl the streets as prostitutes in a country where more than 3 million are HIV positive. The regime in power has policies militating for the spread of prostitution to please its foreign guests and degenerate officials who patronize exclusive topless bars in which preteen girls serve as waitresses. The overall social decay and total absence of democracy, the spread of drug use, the rampant frustration and desperation have all added up to make the condition of women unenviable. Worse still young girls and women are trafficked to the Middle east (some 30,000 in Lebanon alone) where they are exploited mercilessly and subjected to crude racism so much so that at least five to six Ethiopian girls are murdered or commit suicide in Lebanon alone.

March 8, as the world observes international women's day, we are forced to sadly note that women in Ethiopia have to yet to struggle to assure their basic rights. Their right to have their own autonomous organization has been denied by a totalitarian regime that has dissolved all such organizations and set up its own satellites. Ethiopian women have not, however, stopped their noble struggle and while mention is often made of famous women political prisoners (Aberash Berta - disappeared since 1993, Bertukan Midiksa - incarcerated for life in Kaliti, hundreds of women prisoners languish in Dedesa, Zwai, Bir Sheleko and other prisons all over the country. The absence of good governance and democracy has made Ethiopian women helpless victims of all kinds of oppression and injustice. A grim situation indeed -- a situation which the EPRP, together with the valiant women of Ethiopia is struggling to end.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party(EPRP)

March 8, 2010

STOP COVERING UP THE CRIMES
OF THE MELES ZENAWI CABAL

The Meles Zenawi regime is presently using food aid donated for 14 million famine victims to further its political aims--insisting that the starving be a member of the front to get any food aid. The situation has been exposed and condemned but there is hardly a pip being heard from the donor countries. The same as the situation back in 1984-5 when the Tigray People's Liberation Front diverted food aid to the famine victims in Tigray, sold grain and sugar in the Sudan, diverted more than a hundred million dollars to its secret bank account (Saudi American Bank in Jeddah, Barclays London, Citibank NY, etc...).

The crime of the TPLF leaders led to the deaths of thousands of Tigrean famine victims. Thousands who were forced to trek from Tigray for hundreds of kilometres to the Wedi Kewli camp near the Sudanese border on the Gondar side perished from diseases and the toll of hunger and the long march. The action was undertaken by force in exchange for food and financial help by Washington which was out "to embarrass" the pro-Soviet Mengistu regime. That the TPLF duped some of the NGOs (one "victim"--Christian Aid--is pathetically trying to deny the fact) while others knew and helped the TPLF in the diversion of the aid to the famine victims. The action of the TPLF was exposed repeatedly by the EPRP for one back in 1984-85 but none of the concerned donors wanted to listen. Now that some ex-TPLF members and leaders are exposing the fact, the NGOs and the TPLF (now in power thanks to the help it got under the cover of famine aid) are desperately trying to discredit the witnesses and to deny the fact. The fact also shows that the aid from Band Aid was one of the help that was diverted for the use of the TPLF for buying arms and for fattening its coffers.

The accusation directed against some of the NGOs is not baseless. Oxfam UK, Save the Children, IRS, German NGOs, Sweden, Norway, War on Want, UNICEF, the Gayle Smiths (she later became Clinton's advisor on African Affairs at the NSA), Grassroots International, IRS, CARE and World Vision are among those who knew that the TPLF was using famine aid to strengthen itself militarily and financially. There was an

insistent call made by the EPRP and others not to hand over food aid to the TPLF or the Mengistu regime as they would surely divert it but this was not heeded. And why it was not heeded was precisely because there was a coordinated policy by the West (with USA in the lead) to strengthen the TPLF and to overthrow the pro Soviet Mengistu regime and famine aid was used as a convenient cover for the operation that was launched after vice president George Bush Sr. visited Khartoum and agreed with Sudanese president Jaffar al Nimeri. These are all facts that cannot be hidden even though there are still those who participated in the criminal act (Abadi Zemo, Gebru Asrat) who try to deny it. The campaign against the Mengistu regime turned into a virtual campaign against Ethiopia (by helping bring an anti Ethiopian cruel group to power). Those who aided and abetted the TPLF in the inhuman act that cost the lives of thousands of Tigreans would do better to admit their mistakes rather than to make futile attempt at a cover up.

The Ethiopian people know the fact. Thousands of citizens who were starving were sacrificed at the altar of cold war politics in an operation that benefited the cruel TPLF thugs.

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

March 23/2010

His Excellency Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of China
State Council
Beijing 100032
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Your Excellency:

We remember a time in the near past when the party and government of the PRC stood on the side of the people of Ethiopia struggling for democracy and sovereignty. It is unfortunate to note today that the time seems to have passed to be replaced by what the people of Ethiopia have started to consider as policies by China detrimental to their basic national interest.

That the PRC reserves the full right to determine its own politics in line with its perception of its national interest is not debatable just as it is our inalienable right as Ethiopians to oppose any policy or politics that goes against the vital interest of Ethiopia and her people. Leaving aside other basic issues like the land grab and economic ventures, we would like to bring to your Excellency's attention the cooperation and active aid that the PRC is giving the repressive regime of Meles Zenawi in the area of internet blocking and radio jamming. As a result, Radio Finote Democracy has been jammed since the last six months and the right of the people to know or be informed trampled upon. That the PRC should be an active accessory to this gross violation of rights is a situation that should be stopped as it contravenes even the basic documents to which China itself is a signatory.

The EPRP calls upon Your Excellency to assure that the PRC stops being part and parcel of the human rights violation actions of the Meles Zenawi regime.

for:

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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party(EPRP)

March 18/2010

ETHIOPIANS STILL EXPECT APOLOGIES FROM ITALY

The Vatican's history revising action of bestowing sainthood on the Pope who backed Fascist Italia's brutal invasion of Ethiopia and the repeated attempt by Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to whitewash the horrible Italian invasion of Ethiopia by the troops of Mussolini makes it imperative for Ethiopians to restate the truth and to demand a formal apology from the Vatican and the Italian government for crimes against humanity committed against the people of Ethiopia.

The invasion of Ethiopia, blessed and financially helped by the Pope, was backed as a civilizing mission by quite a few western powers of the time. Mussolini's invading hordes laid waste to Ethiopia, decimated one budding generation of intellectuals, hanged and chopped off people's head with axes, spread terror, committed massacres in Addis Abeba and elsewhere, raped thousands of women, burnt churches and killed priests (hundreds of monks in Debre Libanos and Abune Petros too), committed untold cruelties over the population. Worst of all, the Italian invaders used mustard gas (poison gas) on the people killing thousands and injuring very many more. This was one of the earliest massive use of poison gas, a crime against humanity. Close to a million Ethiopians were killed by the invaders.

The Vatican has yet to apologize for giving full support to the fascist invaders and blessing the illegal war against Ethiopia. The Italian government has not apologized adequately nor has it paid adequate compensation to the victims of its invasion and poison gas attack. For years, the EPRP has demanded a redress, an admission of guilt at least, and a clear and formal apology and it is doing so again now. Honouring the Pope who praised a brutal fascist invasion or attempting to present the crime against humanity as a "civilizing mission" cannot be allowed to pass in silence.

The people of Ethiopia demand and expect an apology from the Vatican and Italy.

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